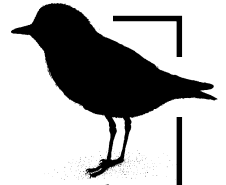


turkey vulture

Nature's Call

An Activity Newsletter for Kids by Utah's Project WILD--Spring 1997



snowy plover

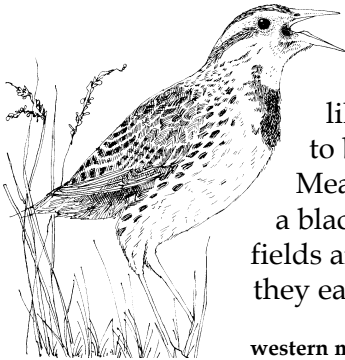
Long Distance? No Problem!

Each spring migratory birds return to Utah. They travel many miles and face many dangers to come to Utah to raise their families. They arrive in the summer because there is plenty of food. When winter comes they fly back to Mexico, Central America or South America where it is warm. Let's meet some of Utah's long-distance travelers.

The broad-tailed hummingbird is only 4 inches long, but it is a mighty flyer. It arrives in Utah each spring after flying thousands of miles from Mexico and Central America. This is the most common hummingbird in Utah. You can find them along mountain streams. They drink nectar from flowers with their long tongues. You usually hear this hummingbird before you see it. The males make loud buzzing sounds as they fly around looking for flowers. They also eat tiny insects they catch in the air.



broad-tailed hummingbird



western meadowlark

Once you hear a meadowlark, you will never forget its beautiful song. It sounds like a flute. It can be heard from as far away as half a mile! Meadowlarks are related to blackbirds. They are bigger than most blackbirds, but they are not black. Meadowlarks have bright yellow feathers on their chests and bellies. They also have a black v-shaped bib on their chests. In Utah, meadowlarks are found in grasslands, fields and pastures statewide. They should be considered a friend to farmers because they eat countless insects during their summer stay in Utah.

Mountain bluebirds are easy to spot. They are bright blue and can often be seen sitting on fences beside pastures. In Utah, you see them most often in the mountains where they nest. They build their nests in holes that woodpeckers have dug in dead trees. Sometimes people cut down dead trees which leaves the birds without homes. You can help these birds by leaving dead trees alone, or you can build nest boxes for them to use. Mountain bluebirds catch many insects to feed their young. By protecting bluebird nests you help make the world beautiful!



mountain bluebird



brown-headed cowbird

People might call brown-headed cowbirds lazy. They do not build nests or raise their own young. Cowbirds lay their eggs in the nests of other birds! The other birds hatch the cowbird's eggs and their own eggs, too. Then they raise the young birds to adults. Sometimes this causes problems. Young cowbirds will eat all the food. This leaves no food for the young of the birds that built the nest. Then the young of the other birds die. Cowbirds used to be called buffalo birds because they followed the great herds of buffalo that used to roam North America. Now the birds follow cows. Why do they follow cows? Because cattle "kick-up" insects as the cattle walk around. The cowbirds then catch the insects.

Turn the page to learn more about Utah's migratory birds!

How much farther is it?

Utah’s migratory birds travel thousands of miles each year. Some birds like the Swainson’s hawk, fly from Argentina in South America to Utah each spring. In the fall the hawks return to Argentina!

Look at the migratory birds on this page. Let’s find out how far they travel each year during their migration. Draw a colored line from where you live in Utah to the place listed by the name of the bird. Now use a piece of string to measure the length of the line. Next, find the map scale and place the string on the scale. How far did the bird fly? Write that number on the line beside the bird. Remember that the bird must return, so you need to double the distance. Try to label all the countries on the map.



Western Meadowlark

Zacatecas, Mexico - blue line

miles

miles x 2=



Mountain Bluebird

Sinaloa, Mexico - yellow line

miles

miles x 2=



Brown-headed Cowbird

Oaxaca, Mexico - green line

miles

miles x 2=

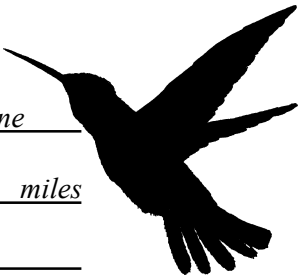


Swainson’s Hawk

Buenos Aires, Argentina - black line

miles

miles x 2=



Broad-tailed Hummingbird

Mazatenango, Guatemala- red line

miles

miles x 2=

There are many different names for migratory birds because they live in many different places. Some migratory birds have Spanish names. Let's see if you can match the Spanish name for the birds with the English name. Look for clues in the dictionary below. Answers are at the bottom of the page.

1) Broad-tailed Hummingbird

2) Western Tanager

3) Ruby-crowned Kinglet

4) Gray Flycatcher

5) Blue Grosbeak

6) Yellow-headed Blackbird

7) Peregrine Falcon

a) Falco Peregrino

b) Tordo Cabeciamarillo

c) Colibri Cola Ancha

d) Tangara Cabeciroja

e) Papamoscas Gris

f) Piquigrueso Azul

g) Reyezuelo de Rojo

Dictionary

beak = pico
black = negro
blue = azul
broad = ancha

flycatcher = papamoscas
gray = gris
green = verde
head = cabeza

hummingbird = colibri
king = reye
purple = morado
red = rojo or roja

tail = cola
tanager = tangara
throat = garganta
yellow = amarillo



Use the instructions to color the broad-tailed hummingbird. Some of the words are Spanish.

- Color the *garganta morado*.
- Color the *pico negro*.
- Color the back and the *cabeza verde*.
- Color the *cola* feathers dark *gris*.
- Color a patch on its side *verde*.
- Color the flower *roja*.

